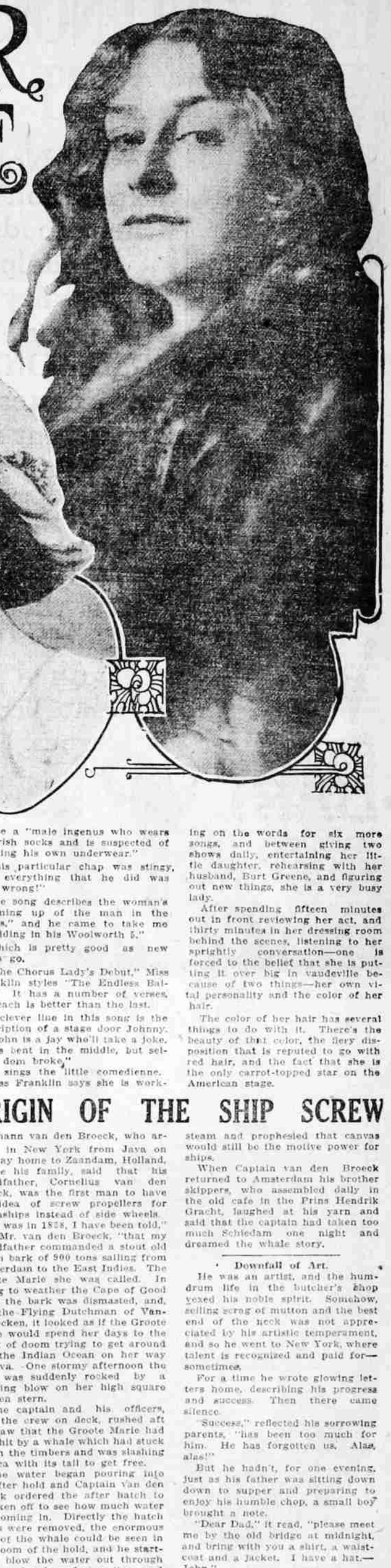
"PUTTING IT OVER BIG" IN VAUDEVILLE

Irene Franklin, the Clever Comedienne, Tells Some Inside Facts Concerning the Difficult Art of Making Thousands Laugh, and Keeping Up With the Latest Stunts to Please the Public.



Vaudeville?

That's the middle name of Irene Franklin.

She made a ten-strike several years ago. Since then she has been the only one in her class—an all-the-year-around vaudeville star drawing down her $2,000 a week.

She's too modest to say wherein lies her wonderful charm, or ability, as some would call it.

As a vaudeville actress, comedienne, song-warbler and person of general good looks, it is the opinion of most of her friends and rivals in the theatrical profession, that she has no equal, much less peer.

Now, of course, the opinion of one's friends is often most flattering. Often it is true. But the opinion of rivals and enemies is not to be disputed. It is, indeed, the last word.

Irene Franklin is that queer mixture, an Irish-Jew. She can prove it. She was born in St. Louis. Her father was a Hungarian Jew and her mother born "on the ould sod."

She is a wee mite of a lady, slender and graceful. Her head is crowned with the most glorious mass of Titian locks it is one's pleasure to behold.

And every strand of that hair grows on her head, and every hair of it boasts its own natural color. But such a head of hair is hard to believe, and Miss Franklin would be the first to forgive a doubting Thomas.

Her first vaudeville act was more than two decades ago. She was carried on and took the part of a 2-months-old infant, and was herself but three months older.

She has been on the vaudeville stage ever since, excepting for a couple of excursions into musical comedy. For two years she was with a Lew Fields company.

"But I like the vaudeville best," she says. "There is something about the rush and hurry of it that appeals to me and makes this life more attractive than any other. In musical comedy one has so much to overcome. In the Lew Fields show the scenery was so magnificent, the chorus so large, the jokes on such large scale, that this little chicken felt quite lost.

DOES SINGING ACT WITHOUT A VOICE.

"Although I do a singing act, I confess that I have no singing voice.

"As a matter of fact, I have three notes and a bluff!"

She opened her wide, blue eyes a little wider when she made that confession.

Naturally her interviewer demurred.

"Oh, but truly. I can't sing. I just convince people that I can against their better judgment, and having once committed themselves, they won't go back on it.

"I had a delicious little note from a chambermaid once, though, in which I received a delightful compliment on my voice. She wrote that she had heard Calve, Maggie Kline and Melba, and she thought my voice was the worst of all."

Three of the songs which have made Miss Franklin so well liked are her "Song of the Chorus Lady's Debut," her "Chambermaid Song," and the "The Girl From Child's."

She says she has had thousands of letters from girls in these three occupations—chorus girl, chambermaid and waitress.

"If girls are wholly mad, I don't know what becomes of them," she laughingly said. "But if they are half mad, I know what they do. They write to me.

"I think I've always gotten along so well because I burlesque woman. Now, I'm perpared to prove that women have a sense of humor. If they hadn't, they wouldn't marry, don't you see?

"Men, on the contrary, are without this sixth sense. The average man strolls into the theater in the evening, and sits down in the front row with his hands crossed over his well filled stomach. And he never sees anything but the chorus ladies' legs.

"A funny little kick from those rounded calves will get tempestuous applause from him—while my best little jokes go over his head.

"So I burlesque woman—and presto, I make a hit. Women are quick to recognize their own little foibles, tricks, vices, vanities and mannerisms, and to see them exaggerated pleased the dear sisters to death."

Women and children have proved a gold mine to Miss Franklin. She gives matinees for the latter at which apples are distributed and she gets the kiddies so worked up that they talk back and forth over the footlights, and as she expresses it, they "all have a perfectly heavenly time."

SINGS KID SONGS FOR THE CHILDREN.

Dressed as a little girl of about 5 years, with her red hair tied with a big black bow, she sings such delightful kiddie songs as "Red Head, Red Head, Gingerbread Head," "It Makes Me Sick," "The Janitor's Child," "I've Got the Mumps," "The Infant Philosopher," and "We Have a New Baby at Our House." The latter and another called "Bobby Has Galluses," are probably the most fetching. Some are Eugene Field's songs.

In Minneapolis not long ago there were a number of children in the audience, and one small auditor wearied of hearing grown-up songs, called out to the star:

"Aw, when are you going to sing 'Wed Head?'"

Another little girl in a theater at Brooklyn was much interested in the song, "When I had the Mumps." At the conclusion, she said sympathetically:

"I had 'em, too."

The children can not be convinced that Miss Franklin singing "The Chambermaid," is a person identical with the little girl who just ran off the stage at the conclusion of "Red Head," waving her hand at her little playmates.

Five years ago Irene Franklin was doing what is called "low comedy," making up for her parts and making out of her very good looking self anything that would fit a comedy character.

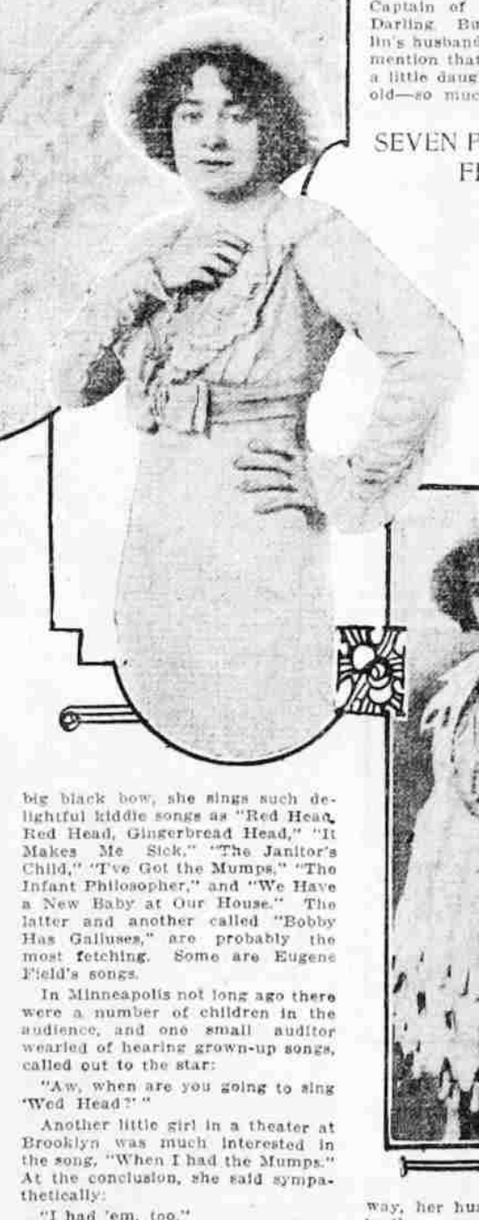
She has "evoluted" though since then, and may deservedly be called a comedienne of high class now. The grotesque make-ups are banished.

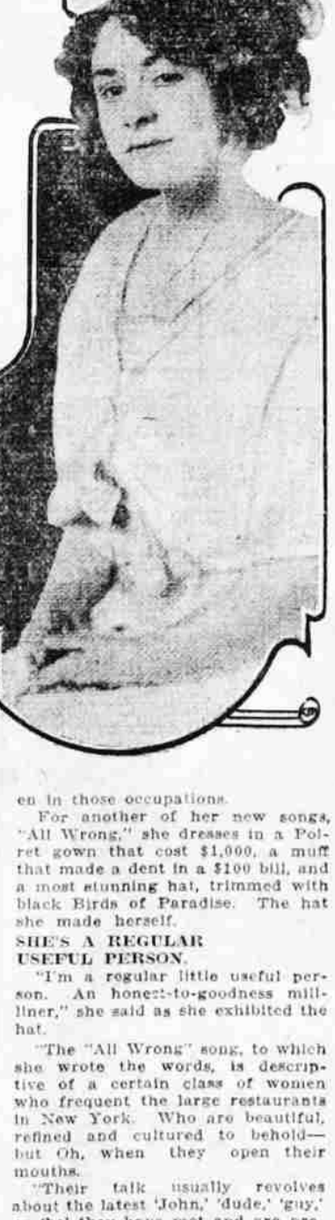
One of her new songs is "The Policeman." In this she wears a stunning little white broadcloth dress made a little along the lines of a policeman's uniform—excepting that her dress is a work of art. It is trimmed with a profusion of brass buttons and gold braid, and on her red locks sits jauntily a most bewitching cap.

In her right hand she swings a gilded night stick, in one end of which is a vanity case.

The song is a telephone dialogue between the "police lady" and the Captain of her precinct, Captain Darling. Burt Greene, Miss Franklin's husband—oh, we'd forgotten to mention that she's married and has a little daughter, Margaret, 5 years old—so much for biography—anyway, her husband wrote the music to the song, as he does to all her songs, and she wrote the words.

SEVEN POSES OF IRENE FRANKLIN.





For the waitress and the chambermaid songs she does not dress the part, but merely does her hair in a style much effected by young women in those occupations.

For another of her new songs, "All Wrong," she dresses in a Poiret gown that cost $1,000, a muff that made a dent in a $100 bill, and a most stunning hat, trimmed with black Birds of Paradise. The hat she made herself.

SHE'S A REGULAR USEFUL PERSON.

"I'm a regular little useful person. An honest-to-goodness milliner," she said as she exhibited the hat.

"The "All Wrong" song, to which she wrote the words, is descriptive of a certain class of women who frequent the large restaurants in New York. Who are beautiful, refined and cultured to behold—but Oh, when they open their mouths.

"Their talk usually revolves about the latest 'John,' 'dude,' 'guy,' or 'bo' they have met and are preparing to trim. Naturally the poor creatures themselves are the persons ultimately trimmed—but that's their life."

The first lines of "All Wrong" describe a "male ingenus who wears feverish socks and is suspected of knitting his own underwear."

This particular chap was stingy, and everything that he did was "All wrong!"

The song describes the woman's summing up of the man in the words," and he came to take me joy-riding in his Woolworth 5."

Which is pretty good as new jokes go.

"The Chorus Lady's Debut," Miss Franklin styles "The Endless Ballad." It has a number of verses, but each is better than the last.

A clever line in this song is the description of a stage door Johnny. "A John is a jay who'll take a joke. He is bent in the middle, but seldom broke,"

gaily sings the little comedienne.

Miss Franklin says she is working on the words for six more songs, and between giving two shows daily, entertaining her little daughter, rehearsing with her husband, Burt Greene, and figuring out new things, she is a very busy lady.

After spending fifteen minutes out in front reviewing her act, and thirty minutes in her dressing room behind the scenes, listening to her sprightly conversation—one is forced to the belief that she is putting it over big in vaudeville because of two things—her own vital personality and the color of her hair.

The color of her hair has several things to do with it. There's the beauty of that color, the fiery disposition that is reputed to go with red hair, and the fact that she is the only carrot-topped star on the American stage.

ORIGIN OF THE SHIP SCREW

Johann van den Broeck, who arrived in New York from Java on his way home to Zaandam, Holland, to see his family, said that his grandfather, Cornelius van den Broeck, was the first man to have the idea of screw propellers for steamships instead of side wheels.

"It was in 1838, I have been told," said Mr. van den Broeck, "that my grandfather commanded a stout old Dutch bark of 900 tons sailing from Amsterdam to the East Indies. The Groote Marie she was called. In trying to weather the Cape of Good Hope the bark was dismasted, and, like the Flying Dutchman of Vanderdecken, it looked as if the Groote Marie would spend her days to the crack of doom trying to get around into the Indian Ocean on her way to Java. One stormy afternoon the bark was suddenly rocked by a crashing blow on her high square wooden stern.

"The captain and his officers, with the crew on deck, rushed aft and saw that the Groote Marie had been hit by a whale which had stuck fast in the timbers and was slashing the sea with its tail to get free.

"The water began pouring into the after hold and Captain Van den Broeck ordered the after hatch to be taken off to see how much water was coming in. Directly the hatch covers were removed, the enormous head of the whale could be seen in the gloom of the hold, and he started to blow the water out through the open hatch as fast as it poured in, so my grandfather said, and in his struggle to release himself the whale propelled the bark ahead at seven knots an hour into Cape Town harbor."

Mr. van den Broeck added that his grandfather tried to get some of the Dutch merchants in Cape Town to take an interest in patenting a propeller for use on steamers instead of paddle wheels, as the Cunard Line then had on the Atlantic, but they shook their heads and said they had little faith in steam and prophesied that canvas would still be the motive power for ships.

When Captain van den Broeck returned to Amsterdam his brother skippers, who assembled daily in the old cafe in the Prins Hendrik Gracht, laughed at his yarn and said that the captain had taken too much Schiedam one night and dreamed the whale story.

Downfall of Art.

He was an artist, and the humdrum life in the butcher's shop vexed his noble spirit. Somehow, selling scrag of mutton and the best end of the neck was not appreciated by his artistic temperament, and so he went to New York, where talent is recognized and paid for—sometimes.

For a time he wrote glowing letters home, describing his progress and success. Then there came silence.

"Success," reflected his sorrowing parents, "has been too much for him. He has forgotten us. Alas, alas!"

But he hadn't, for one evening, just as his father was sitting down down to supper and preparing to enjoy his humble chop, a small boy brought a note.

"Dear Dad," it read, "please meet me by the old bridge at midnight, and bring with you a shirt, a waistcoat and a jacket. I have a hat.—John."

"Horrors, Yes!"

"What could be more sad than a man without a country?" feelingly asked the high school literature teacher of her class.

"A country without a man," responded a pretty girl just as feelingly.—Woman's Home Companion.

Crowds in motion on grandstands and similar structures exert a strain equal to about 175 per cent of their weight.

HALE AND HEARTY BROOKLYN, N. Y., MAN ROUNDS OUT FULL CENTURY OF A MOST REMARKABLE CAREER

Joseph DeLong, 62 Devore street, in the Eastern District of Brooklyn, recently celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Sixty-one lineal descendants are living today. Six children out of seven whom he reared, twenty-seven grandchildren, and twenty-six great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren are alive to do him honor.

Men have lived to be one hundred years of age before. Few men have reached the golden century of life with the peace, with the serenity of mind, with the good will in the soul for all men, with the charity for all that have been attained on this centennial birthday of Joseph DeLong.

Joseph DeLong talks of his early life, of his struggles and of his work. During the telling of this story he does not dwell upon the hardships of that work. It is toward the achievement of his work that he is aiming in his tale, just as it was toward the real achievement for which he aimed in life. He is erect and alert. His eyes are sparkling as he goes back to those days which he can remember for nearly 100 years ago, and many of which return to him as if they were but yesterday. He is living his youth again. He sees the old log cabin where he was born. He hears his mother's voice. He sees his father striving to keep the family together. Slowly the years turn back for him. The yesterday of long ago becomes today.

There is the white haired, white bearded old man. "Not a day over 75!" you would say if you could see him. He still sees well, but not to read. A slight deafness interferes only to a small degree with his conversation. Otherwise the faculties of his youth are unimpaired. As he tells his story he becomes more and more interested. One incident leads to another. The enthusiasm of ninety years and more is his again. Why, bless you! he has taken up the trail of life where your great-great grandfather laid it down. And he—Joseph DeLong? Why, he is a young fellow still!

"I was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania," he says. "My father was Moses DeLong. He was a shoemaker and a cooper. He tried to set me to work at his trades, but it was no go." He shakes his head. "I spoiled more work than I made. Our family came from Huguenot stock and our immediate family was Pennsylvania Dutch. All the people around us spoke Dutch, but they were anxious to have the children learn English and so they cut down trees and built a log schoolhouse. As none of the teachers talked English and as we had no English books, when I left school all I could say in English was 'yes' and 'no.'

"I had a brother who had gone to Elizabeth, N. J., and so when I was 16 years old I went on there, too, as there was no chance for me in Pennsylvania. Another brother and a sister had gone to New York and I thought it was time I also should be starting out for myself. My brother Abraham helped me all he could when I reached Elizabeth. There were only 3,000 people there at that time. I was a bricklayer and mason and went to work at my trade, but I learned hat making and worked at that till I was 23 or 24 years old, and then I went to Norwalk, Conn., where I continued as a hat maker till I was 25.

"When I was 19 years old the cholera plague came in 1832, and people died from it in New York City at the rate of 200 a day. We had two or three deaths a day in Elizabeth, but I was not afraid of it, and, although constantly exposed, was never ill."

Then the two important events of his life took place. He married Mary Sophia Lopes of New York City in 1837, when he was in his twenty-fifth year, came to New York and entered a commercial business. Mary Lopes' father, Davis Lopes, was in the War of 1812, and his father, Isaac Lopes, was in the War of the Revolution with Lafayette.

"In 1852 I went out to Iowa. I intended to be a farmer, but when I saw conditions there I came back well satisfied to continue in the mercantile business. I went all the way by rail, but it took seventeen days to make the trip there and back. My wife died in 1907, 88 years of age. That is about all there is to tell. I have had an eventful life."